

Spelling: Essential Lists

The 290 words that make up the essential lists are used most often when we write. Together they make up about 75% of most writing, so they are very important.

These words have been arranged in alphabetical order and put in lists according to how often they are used. Because these words are used so often, it is very important that we learn to spell each one.

New Zealand Curriculum Levels

Level 1 (Year 1 & 2 students): Students who are spelling proficiently at level 1 will be able to spell some high frequency words (Lists 1-3) correctly.

Level 2 (Year 3 & 4 students): Students who are spelling proficiently at level 2 will be able to spell most high frequency words (Lists 1-4) correctly.

Level 3 (Year 5 & 6 students): Students who are spelling proficiently at level 3 will be able to spell most high frequency words (Lists 1-7) correctly.

LEARNING YOUR WORDS: **LOOK, SAY, COVER, WRITE, CHECK**

LOOK at the word you want to learn, and I mean really look. Which bits of the spelling are easy and which are not so obvious? Mark the 'hard spots', that is the difficult part of the word, using a different coloured pen. Is the word similar in spelling to another word that has a related meaning? Can you break it into parts? Have a really good look and think about the spelling until you think you can spell it.

SAY the word, while looking at it. Is the spelling a reflection of the sound? If not what is different?

COVER the word with your hand or a piece of paper. Close your eyes and try to 'see' the word in your head.

WRITE it.

CHECK your spelling by uncovering the word and comparing it with your spelling. Check it letter by letter. If it's wrong, start again; if it's right, celebrate how clever you are.

ESSENTIAL WORDS

The 290 words below, are used most often when we write. Together they make up about 75% of most writing, so they are very important. These words have been arranged in alphabetical order and put in lists according to how often they are used. Because these words are used so often, it is very important that we learn to spell each one.

Essential List 1 (10 words - 25% of writing)

a	I	it	the	was
and	in	my	to	we

Essential List 2 (20 words - 15% of writing)

at	had	of	that	up
but	he	on	then	went
for	is	she	there	when
got	me	so	they	you

Essential List 3 (30 words - 10% of writing)

about	be	go	into	our
after	because	going	just	out
all	came	have	like	said
are	day	her	mum	some
as	down	his	not	were
back	get	home	one	with

Essential List 4 (50 words - 10% of writing)

again	do	next	people	time
an	first	night	put	took
around	food	no	ran	two
big	from	now	saw	us
by	good	off	school	very
can	has	old	see	well
come	him	only	started	what
could	house	or	their	will
dad	if	other	them	would
did	little	over	this	your

Essential List 5 (50 words - 5% of writing)

am	door	last	once	through
another	everyone	left	play	told
away	family	log	really	too
bed	five	looked	room	walked
been	found	made	something	want
before	friend	man	still	way

best	fun	more	thing	where
brother	heard	morning	think	which
called	here	name	thought	who
car	know	never	three	year

Essential List 6 (70 words - 5% of writing)

also	cool	eyes	head	jump
always	dark	fell	hit	knew
asked	decided	felt	how	later
black	dog	find	inside	life
boy	eat	four	its	live
bus	end	gave	it's	lot
cat	even	getting	I'll	lunch
coming	every	great	I'm	make
minutes	place	sister	top	water
most	ready	sleep	town	while
much	ride	suddenly	tree	why
nice	right	take	turned	window
opened	run	tell	until	woke
outside	say	ten	wanted	yes

Essential List 7 (60 words - 3% of writing)

any	each	ground	money	soon
baby	ever	guard	mother	stay
bad	everything	hand	myself	stop
ball	face	happened	new	swimming
being	fast	happy	parents	tea
bit	father	help	picked	than
boat	few	hole	playing	tried
bought	finally	hot	presents	under
camp	finished	hour	road	wait
dead	game	let	side	won
died	girl	look	small	work
doing	gone	many	sometimes	world

Essential List 8 (Commonly Misspelt Words)

allowed	centre	dollars	friends	lightning	second	wasn't
awhile	chocolate	don't	front	luckily	someone	watch
believe	clothes	everybody	grabbed	nearly	stopped	weren't
breakfast	couldn't	everyday	having	police	straight	we're
brought	didn't	everywhere	holidays	present	they're	whole
cannon	different	excited	hopped	probably	threw	won't
can't	disappeared	favourite	hospital	quiet	tomorrow	you're
caught	doesn't	field	instead	scared	video	programme